

Press Release
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USAID Administrator inaugurated third stage of El Sillar Road and visited Alternative Development projects in Chapare

“The United States has been and will continue to be a dependable partner of Bolivia in order to rehabilitate the country’s road infrastructure,” said USAID’s worldwide Administrator Andrew Natsios at the inauguration ceremony of the first three kilometers of El Sillar Road’s third stage. This key road, financed by USAID, will connect Bolivia with its trade neighbors in South America and will integrate the national territory by connecting its main regions and cities.

Natsios also reaffirmed the commitment of the Government of the United States to strengthen Bolivia’s legal economy and support President Mesa’s objective of improving roads in order to achieve a stronger economy. “USAID believes that infrastructure is a factor crucial to economic development. Without infrastructure, farmers cannot take their products to the markets and economies lose competitiveness,” Natsios said. U.S. Ambassador to Bolivia David Greenlee, USAID’s Director in Bolivia Liliana Ayalde, and several Bolivian government ministers also attended the inauguration ceremony. The U.S. government, through its Agency for International Development (USAID) also financed the first two stages of El Sillar Road, providing approximately US\$ 4 million.

El Sillar is a key route for the economic development of the Chapare region and the whole country, since approximately 3,200 vehicles use it every day. Of that figure, an estimated 2,500 vehicles are high capacity trucks carrying agricultural products such as soybeans and their derivatives, cattle and poultry, timber and many other products originating from alternative development projects.

Natsios, along with the binational delegation, also visited several productive projects under the Alternative Development programs, such as UNBANANA, the oldest banana-producing company in Chapare and FABOPAL, a palm heart producer. These Alternative Development companies have received ample support from the U.S. government through USAID in terms of infrastructure, technological transference and marketing strategies. Chapare is home to a significant illegal coca production.